

the Black Apple Press



Fresh fruit, rotten wages

The re-opening of the inquiry into whether soft fruit company S&A Produce would be given permission to build a 'village' for its workers has been dismissed by Whitehall officials.

As the Black Apple Press reported in our last issue, S&A currently provide disgraceful living quarters: "Six to 10 people sharing caravans with poor standards of safety and hygiene, with problems of electricity and water supplies."

But let's not forget other conditions endured by workers at the farm: charges for basic health care, 14 hour shifts with only one 30 minute break per day, working 6-7 days a week, serious mistreatment of employees including examples of workers needing urgent medical care yet being denied it. This from a company who in 2004 reported an almost £2m annual profit!

If S&A are not able to provide safe, hygienic and suitable accommodation for its workers then they should be looking at lodging in other areas or should stop employing so many people dependent on temporary accommodation until they have the facilities to support them.

See 'Downing tools', page three.

The road to nowhere

Sidekicks for big business, Herefordshire Council, are destroying this county, a fact evident over recent months with their agreement of damaging projects like the National Grid gas pipeline and the Rotherwas Access Road.

The council initiated Rotherwas Access Road (RAR) project is one that they have pursued at all costs and against the advice of many consultants.

In 1992 the RAR was turned down by government because of the detriment to the environment; the road will cut across Dinedor Hill, an Area of Great Landscape Value. Subsequently, it was turned down for funding from the Department of Transport three times in the past five years for being poor value for money.

Undeterred, Herefordshire Council gave themselves planning permission in February 2003 and have recently been granted £9.5 million from the regional government

fund, Advantage West Midlands. Still looking to find the remaining £11.5m for the proposed £20m road, the council will be selling off greenbelt land for housing to help pay the costs despite the advice of their own staff; The Unitary Development Plan inspector has recommended against this housing development citing its environmentally damaging effects. Masters of destruction, Herefordshire Council are carrying on regardless.

The council have continually insisted that it will ease traffic in the city, a claim that has gained a lot of support amongst the county's motorists. But yet again, their own commissioned traffic study found that building the RAR will lead to a 22% induced traffic growth by 2022 compared to 14% growth under the 'do nothing' alternative. The road is an effective dead end leading from the A49 (south) into the Rotherwas industrial estate and is in such a poor position that many

workers at the industrial estate won't find it useful.

In August this year council leader Roger Phillips publicly said that they owed a great debt to the businesses of Rotherwas, but did not comment on where that debt had come from (back-handers from businesses, perhaps?).

It is glaringly obvious to see that, far from benefiting the average driver, this road is being built solely for the bosses at Rotherwas and no one else. And when their profits increase you can be sure that the workers will see none of it.

Between Herefordshire Council and the bosses at Rotherwas they are set to be responsible for the most environmentally damaging project in Hereford for decades... and all for money. We must stop them.

Much of the information for this article has been taken from the Rotherwas Cul-de-Sac campaign website: www.rotherwas-cul-de-sac.org.uk

Unison won't win, but the self-organisation and mass, direct action of workers and patients groups can.

No more prisons!

Herefordshire police stations will contribute an initial twelve cells to the total of 500 requested by Home Secretary, John Reid, reported the Hereford Journal (11th October 2006) in response to overcrowding in Britain's prisons.

Reid had recently announced the UK's prisons are now full and more space is needed to incarcerate the people convicted of criminal activities. So instead of realising that now might be the time to start discussing preventions, rather than cures, the Home Secretary, and the complicit police force in Herefordshire, continue to lock people up.

Well, perhaps we can be a bit more intelligent then the government and think for ourselves: what motivates a criminal? And now there's no space left, how can we really change society enough to stop crime occurring at all? The solution: a social revolution.

Muggings, violent robberies, burglaries, international drug rackets, and many more of their type; All of these crimes are based on acquiring goods for money making, typically by poor people because they don't have the means to get what they need legally, whether this be money for bills or money for drug addictions. Yet, if money was abolished, and things were exchanged freely, the majority of crime would cease to happen; there would be no need to steal car radios or mug people for iPods because these items would be worthless.

So what about crimes not motivated by money? Cold blooded murders and rapes etc.? The reac-

tion to these crimes, 'these people are sick in the head', is often true and the discipline and isolation of prison doesn't help. People like this need serious medical help, not to be locked up and ignored.

So would West Mercia Police and the British State listen if we suggested overthrowing Capitalism and abolishing money as a solution for crime? Of course not, they'd never swap their life of luxury for the good of the world. Never.



National anti-ID meeting

The Nottingham group of the Defy-ID network will be hosting a national meeting to discuss opposition to ID cards and the National Identity Register.

The meeting, happening in November, will provide information about opposing ID, a chance to share resources and ideas

and also to meet and discuss with other anti-ID campaigners. It is open to all, but is particularly intended for those who are already active or looking to get involved with the struggle against ID cards (see Nottingham Defy-ID bulletins for more information, available from their website).

The meeting will take place on Saturday, 25th November 2006 at The Sumac Centre, Nottingham, starting at 11am.

For full details of the day, as well as posters and flyers to advertise the event, visit: www.nottingham-defy-id.org.uk/ gathering

Downing tools

In this two-part feature on industrial action, the Black Apple Press looks at some of the ways workers have stood up for themselves against the boss.

Selective strikes

Rather than an all-out strike, rapid and random stoppages can be highly effective. Unpredictability is a great weapon in the hands of the workers. In the US, Pennsylvania teachers used the Selective Strike to great effect in 1991, when they went out on strike on Monday and Tuesday, reported for work on Wednesday, struck

again on Thursday etc. This on-off tactic is effective in preventing the bosses hiring scabs to replace strikers.

The sit-down strike

Timed and executed right, a strike can be won in minutes. Such strikes are 'sitdowns' when everyone just stops work and sits tight, or 'mass grievances' when everybody leaves work to go to the boss's office to discuss some matter of importance. This can have many advantages over a conventional strike.

Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) theatre extras, facing a

50% pay cut, waited for the right time to strike. The play had 150 extras dressed as Roman soldiers to carry the Queen on and off the stage. When the cue for the Queen's entrance came, the extras surrounded the Queen and refused to budge until the pay was not only restored, but tripled.

The go-slow

Workers with demands that the bosses are unwilling to meet can collectively decide to start a go-slow. By deliberately slowing the rate of work all together, the bosses' targets are hit without workers losing wages. If everyone sticks together in solidarity victimisation of individuals can also be prevented. At the turn

I've read that somewhere before

We publish an extract from a Rebel Bull article (January 2003) on the redundancies made by cider giants Bulmers. Rebel Bull was the bulletin of the Herefordshire Anarchist Group, now defunct, providing bold comment on local issues.

"Meanwhile, speaking on local radio, MP for Hereford Paul Keetch expressed his "sincere concern" by informing the public he would be working with the bosses to help restore the company's profits. Never mind about the 200 workers who will now be laid off. Never mind that they have families to support and bills to pay while looking for new work in the already jobless Hereford. He didn't seem to care about them one bit, but then again that's a typical politician for you - always siding with the boss!"

Radical film in Hereford

Guerilla Cinema are a local group frustrated with modern media and its political spin, lies and half truths. They organise screenings of contemporary counter-cultural films.

The group will be showing '**Contempt of conscience**' about the Peace Tax Seven, and '**The only clown in the village**' on Thursday 9th Nov, 8pm at the Riverside Community Learning Centre, Bartonsham. Admission is free. guerillacinema@hotmail.co.uk

of the 20th century, a gang of section men working on a railway in Indiana were notified of a cut in their wages. The workers immediately took their shovels to the blacksmith shop and cut two inches from the scoops. Returning to work they told the boss "short pay, short shovels."

The sick-in

The sick-in is a good way to strike without actually striking. The idea is to cripple your workplace by having all or most of the workers call in sick on the same day or days. Unlike the formal walkout, it can be used effectively by single departments and work areas, and can often be successfully used even without a formal union organisation.

Anarchism aims to create a society without hierarchical authority. That means no divisions between rulers and ruled, workers and bosses, leaders and followers, order givers and order takers. It means decisions are made directly by those affected by them, not by authorities.

Anarchists seek freedom for all. Everyone should be free to determine their own destinies, limited only by the equal freedom of others. This freedom should be a real, actual possibility, not an abstract right.

Anarchists are opposed to patriarchy and to racism. A free society will not exist while women face fear, discrimination and dependence on men. Neither will it exist where people are judged because of the colour of their skin. Discrimination treats people as representatives of a stereotyped group, rather than free, unique individuals.

Anarchists are not opposed to organisation. Anarchy is about organisation. It is about voluntary co-operation between equals. We are opposed, however, to organisations based on authority and hierarchy.

Anarchists believe in the necessity of 'direct democracy'. Rather than taking the management of their own affairs away from people and putting it in the hands of others, anarchists favour organisations

which minimise authority, keeping power in the hands of those who are affected by any decisions reached. Instead of electing politicians to rule us, we can make our own decisions through face-to-face neighbourhood and workplace assemblies and voluntary confederations.

Anarchists seek the destruction of the State. The State centralises decision making power into the hands of a few, giving them the power to use violence to enforce their will. It separates society into rulers and ruled, and robs us of the freedom to control over their own lives. We will not be free while the State exists.

Anarchists seek an end to private property and state property. Of course, we recognise everyone has a right to personal possessions - we don't want to make our toothbrushes common property! Private property means the monopoly of wealth, the right to prevent others using it, whether you are using it or not. Property creates an authoritarian relationship between those who own the means of life, and those who use them but do not own them. We think that land should be managed by those who occupy or cultivate it. Houses should be managed by those who live in them, without having to grovel to landlords or local governments. Workplaces should be managed by those who work there, under the guidance of the wider community. In

short, "property" should be controlled by those who use it or are affected by its use. No one should "own" (i.e. control) land, housing and productive tools that they are not personally using - whether they are "private individuals" or government officials.

Anarchists are socialists. But we are **libertarian socialists**. For us, socialism means management of production by the workers themselves, not owners, bosses or government bureaucrats. Workplaces should not be controlled by private owners or by the state, but by those who do the work and by those people that are effected by the work. We should manage our workplaces without bosses, through workers councils - face-to-face meetings of the whole workforce in every factory, office or farm. These would collectively make all "management" decisions on a basis of one-worker-one-vote.

Anarchists take action in the here and now. We don't vote; we organise! We have as much freedom as we are willing to take. Only by taking direct action to change the world can a libertarian society be achieved. Anarchists are busy organising in their workplaces and communities, spreading our ideas and leading by example. We work to create the facts of the future, today, planting libertarian institutions like seeds within our authoritarian society.

Anarchist Federation

BM ANARFED
London
WC1N 3XX
www.afed.org.uk

The Anarchist Federation (AF) is "an organisation of class struggle anarchists aiming to abolish capitalism and all oppression to create a free and equal society. This is anarchist communism."

They push for the self-organisation of the working class and social revolution as "only the direct action of the working class people can defeat and ultimately overthrow capitalism." To achieve this, organisation is vital.

The AF is the leading anarchist communist organisation in these isles and is a member of the International of Anarchist Federations (IAF).

IWW

PO Box 1158
Newcastle Upon Tyne
NE99 4XL
www.iww.org.uk

The Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) is an international revolutionary DIY union. From the preamble to their constitution:

"The working class and employing class have nothing in common. There can be no peace so long as hunger and want are found among millions of the working people and the few, who make up the employing class, have all the good things in life.

Between these two classes a struggle must go on until the workers of the world organise as a class, take production of the means of production, abolish the wage system and live in harmony with the earth."

Libcom

www.libcom.org

Libcom.org is a libertarian communist website promoting anarchist ideas in the British Isles. They provide an excellent source of information and make the ideal starting place for those web-inclined people wanting to find out more.

Libcom also provide an up-to-date directory of anarchist and libertarian groups across the British Isles.

For discussions on the ideas of anarchism, visit their lively forum pages.

AK Press

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